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October 2006
Volume 42, Issue I

The Past, Present and Future of Equal Marriage Stephen Hutchison chats with gay rights activist Laurie Arron

For the past few years, gay marriage has been the most divisive, emotional and dramatic issue on both the Canadian and the American political stages. In 2002-2003, a legal and social revolution swept across North America, as courts in British Columbia, Quebec, Ontario, and several U.S. states struck down the opposite-sex definition of marriage as discriminatory. In the United States, this revolution was followed by a wave of counter-revolution, as regressive as it was apparently unstoppable. In every U.S. state save for Massachusetts, conservative legislators wielded the tyranny of the majority against the gay and lesbian minority, successfully using referenda to alter the state constitutions to explicitly exclude gays from marriage (ironically, in a 1998 article, Stephen Harper himself rightly criticized referenda on social issues as "Bonapartist" and "undemocratic"). In Canada, however, the revolution was seemingly inexorable in its advance, carrying the day against a furious but increasingly impotent anti-gay conservatism. During the early summer of 2005, I, and many others across the country, celebrated when Parliament passed the Civil Marriage Act, officially making equal marriage the law of the land. The election of the Harper government, with its commitment to restore the former definition of marriage, has, however, thrown the safety of gay marriage into question. Gay rights groups across Canada have begun gearing up for a renewed struggle to protect their rights.

It was, therefore, entirely appropriate that the U of T Law School held a panel discussion on same-sex marriage on Tuesday, September 26. As it happens, the event was organized by second-year U of T law student and my fellow Innis alum and close personal friend, Christine Davies. Davies managed to produce a star-studded lineup for the discussion. The speakers included Cynthia Petersen, the gay rights lawyer who successfully argued the case for equal

marriage before the British Columbia Court of Appeal (the first court to strike down the gay marriage ban) and before the Supreme Court of Canada, and Laurie Arron, Canada's gay rights lobbyist par excellence, formerly the Director of Advocacy for Egale and currently the National Coordinator of Canadians for Equal Marriage. What followed was a fascinating discussion of how the gay marriage revolution was effected, with Petersen providing the legal narrative and Arron, himself a U of T Law alum, providing the political narrative. Afterwards, I had the interesting opportunity to speak with Arron about the future of equal marriage.

In fact, Petersen informed us, the issue of gay marriage almost came to a head much earlier than widely thought; potential court cases arose as early as the 70s and as recently as 1995. On both occasions, Petersen explained, lawyers within the gay community had persuaded the litigants not to proceed, fearing that attempting to proceed too early would result in an irreversible upper-court defeat. The judiciary, Petersen reasoned, would be much readier to accept equal marriage after gays and lesbians had won for themselves more of the rights surrounding marriage. "Opponents of gay rights always argued that granting this or that right would eventually lead to gay marriage," Arron noted, wryly adding with a mischievous grin, "they were right of course: that was the point," eliciting warm laughter for the other participants.

The government's legal argument against equal marriage, derided by Petersen as "hare-brained" and "nonsensical," was apparently largely the devising of then-Health Minister Anne McLellan, ironically herself the former Dean of Law at the University of Alberta. The government attempted to argue that the former definition of marriage was in fact extra-legal and extra-constitutional, predating law and

therefore nor beholden to law (one might make the same argument about slavery or even cannibalism). The various anti-gay interveners evidently stuck to this ludicrous argument throughout the entire process, which does much to explain their universal and humiliating defeat. Throughout, Arron informed us, then-Justice Minister Martin Cauchon had championed equal marriage to his cabinet colleagues, first attempting to persuade cabinet against adopting McLellan's preposterous course, then convincing Prime Minister Jean Chrétien not to appeal the ruling, and finally organizing pro-gay marriage forces to narrowly win the Parliamentary vote in the fall of 2003. After the House of Commons rejected a Conservative anti-gay marriage motion by three votes, Cauchon, according to Arron, "collapsed on his desk, completely exhausted. He'd been up all night, calling every possible supporter to come to Ottawa."

An interesting episode that occurred between the court ruling and the Parliamentary vote was a vote in the Justice Committee. The anti-gay marriage MP Derek Lee was detained in another meeting, and a pro-gay marriage MP took his place. Just before the vote was held, gay marriage advocates noticed Lee walking across the corridors of the Centre Block to take his place in the Justice Committee meeting. Realizing that Lee's presence would cost gay marriage the vote, a gay rights activist intercepted Lee and stalled him until the vote was over. The ruse worked, and the motion carried by a single vote.

...Continued on Page 4

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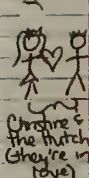
The Innis Herald Letter to the Editor

Dear Editors of the Innis Herald,

Hi. I'm writing to you because I'm so
so SO MAD at you guys.

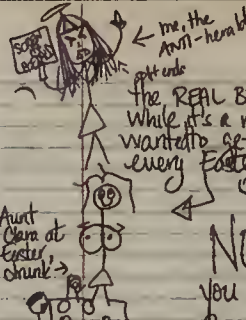


So this week I'm at Innis College and I see all
the fresh new editions of all the college newspapers.
I go to the newspaper stand and take a new
copy of the Varsity, the Mike and the Herald.
I pick up the Herald first because I ♥
Christine Creighton & former editor, the tutch.



The front cover of Michael Humphrey's "Choose
Your Own Adventure" I was so excited!
A continuation of the last edition! BUT THEN!
To my shock + horror, I ended up in the
SAME PLACE AS LAST YEAR!

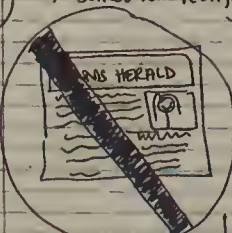
I AM SO PISSED AT YOU GUYS! Did you
think the readership of the Herald
wouldn't notice your feeble attempt at
simply reprinting the last issue? You
ASSHOLES! This is even worse than the time
that the season premiere of
"Grey's Anatomy" wasn't shown and instead, the
second episode was aired (though I don't
watch that show). This was like being in the
house of God (Innis College) and expecting to be
given wine so I can get drunk and instead being given



Jesus in his manger
the REAL BLOOD of Jesus, of Nazareth!
While it's a nice reference to history, you
wanted to get drunk like your Aunt Clara at
every Easter mass! I WANTED TO GET DRUNK
OFF YOUR FUNNY!

NOW, Since I'm so PISSED at
you guys, I should hope that a really
REALLY good edition will follow. If it
doesn't, consider this a threat to take
"the tutch" hostage.

Also, I feel that you should send me
a copy of the first season of "Grey's Anatomy"
to somewhat rectify your HUGE mistake.



Thank you. (but not really)
Sincerely,
A no longer devoted
reader of what
was formerly the
greatest newspaper
in the world,
Dorian P.
The Anti-herald

JUST SAY NO!

I wiped a browser here,
well, it was actually, because
but it's the disgusted thought
that counts

If You Want My Advice...

Jennifer Charles reflects on the Principal's Luncheon with Larry Wasser

When I received an invitation to the Principal's Luncheon with Larry Wasser, the President of L.W. Capital Corporation and Innis College Alumnus, I had a premonition that it would lead me in one of two directions. Before I begin, I should preface by explaining that I have been in complete limbo lately, scrounging up reference letters and desperately trying to come up with an actual intent before even thinking about stating it, and altogether doubting my abilities. In all honesty, applying to grad school (or should I say stressing out at the mere mention of grad school), has thus far served only to uproot all my supposed ambitions. For whatever reason, I saw this opportunity to meet and learn from Mr. Wasser as a defining moment. It sounds hyperbolic, I know, but as my undergraduate studies come to a close and my indecision persists, I find myself looking for signs to guide me through my 'mid academic-life crisis'. I had known pre-luncheon that I would either be insufferably discouraged or suitably inspired.

During my time at the University of Toronto I have heard others speak and offer 'words of wisdom' to aspiring undergraduates, and usually I come out feeling deflated rather than uplifted. Hearing Mr. Wasser's advice and personal anecdotes had the opposite effect on me. He didn't give a clichéd motivational speech or his 'top ten tips for succeed-

ing in business'. He didn't prattle on about his impressive personal achievements and admirable philanthropy, though he very well could have, considering his remarkable success and generosity. Instead, and what resonated most with me, was his emphasis on pursuing what you are passionate about and making a difference. It sounds simple, but I think the

ties it offers. However, his 'do what you love' philosophy was something I needed to hear. It was more open-ended than any other advice I have ever received. It was vague yet personal. Unlike other advice-givers, he didn't say: "pursue the subject you are passionate about". That kind of limited advice usually leaves me with the sinking feeling that I'm not

really that passionate about any subject, especially in comparison to the multiplicity of U of T intelligentsia. I took his advice to heart and came away from the event not contemplating whether I am capable of further academic success, but with the realization that I do sincerely want to pursue graduate studies. I concluded that I want it badly enough to put time and thought into the applications, regardless of how much easier it might be to take a year off and do it when I'm not juggling a full course load and the management of a College paper. I've decided that I might prefer to do an M.A. in English rather than Political Science. Who knows if I'll ever really want to go to law school, but it doesn't matter. I'm taking Mr. Wasser's advice. I'm just going to do what I love, and if I give it 100% the rest will follow. Think about it, he was just a kid from Innis College too, but he followed his passion and look where it got him.

When you see posters or receive an email about the next Principal's Luncheon, make sure to RSVP quickly and take advantage of a great opportunity.



implications are profound. Going into this luncheon feeling the stresses of the academic rat race, I found it refreshing to be told that GPA isn't everything and that the letters following your name aren't the only measure of success.

Through both his words and his contributions to Innis College, Mr. Wasser encourages students to take full advantage of their university education and the opportuni-

From Saskatchewan to Africa: Anything's Possible

Melissa Brown urges you to join WUSC

For those of you who have lived in Toronto your entire life, or have been fortunate enough to travel extensively, multiculturalism probably isn't new to you. It was to me though; I'm from Saskatchewan. On just my second day here in Toronto I ventured out onto the TTC (it was also only my second time ever seeing a subway; the first time was when I was 18) and traveled into Scarborough. You wanna talk about culture shock, well, I was certainly feeling it that day. And it wasn't the last time either. Every time I go out for dinner with my friends to an Asian restaurant the meal usually begins with me asking "What is this?" and "Can I have a fork please?" (to this day, despite my many attempts at it, I'm still hopeless at chopsticks, although on the plus side, I do now know what bok choy is).

Anyway, you are probably asking yourself right now is there a point to this article, or am I just gonna bore you with my stories? Well, yeah, there is a point I'm trying to make. Consider the fact that I came to Toronto from another province of Canada, not some far away land, and yet I still managed to feel intimidated. Now imagine what 50 refugee students every year must go through, leaving

behind their refugee camps and family in order to study in Canada, leaving behind all that they had ever known.

The program responsible for overseeing and making all of this possible is the World University Service of Canada (WUSC for short). As an organization, WUSC is able to include among its members 50 colleges and universities across Canada, including five colleges here at the U of T. Universities across Canada support these students, aiding them not only financially or academically, but emotionally as well, helping them to adjust to life (and the weather). This year, on August 31, these five colleges, including Innis College, were able to welcome five new students to the U of T, all because of WUSC's Student Refugee Program. If you haven't had the chance to meet these amazing people

then consider joining one of the local WUSC committees. I'm pretty sure you'll find yourself not only learning

a lot, but becoming inspired to act and get involved, just as I have found myself to be. Now into my third year with WUSC I have not lost any of my interest or belief in it, its causes, and its programs. And so I encourage you to join a committee (I can be reached at mcbs.brown@utoronto.ca) and see first-hand what it is I am writing about. If you don't have the time then at least look it up on the internet at www.wusc.ca and see for yourself what WUSC hopes to accomplish. Who knows, you may find yourself so inspired that you'll end up in Africa (or at the very least, after having read this article, in Saskatchewan).



Students
Without
Borders™

Camden 28: What Would You Do to Stop a War? Matthew Brehrens introduces a film coming to Innis Town Hall on October 25th

Popular accounts of 1960s protest often reduce that historical period to two dominant images: hippies smoking dope at Woodstock and riot police clashing with "wild-eyed radicals." Unfortunately, such images fail to capture the depth of resistance to racism and war that shook the globe during the period. Among the many creative and compelling forms of protest that marked the era was a movement that grew out of the Catholic Church as priests, nuns, and laypeople increasingly took a role in public life, joining marches with Martin Luther King, Jr., and speaking out against the war in Vietnam.

It was the U.S. invasion of the Southeast Asian country and the subsequent atrocities accompanying the occupation — perhaps best symbolized by the mass dropping of napalm throughout the countryside, burning alive anyone in its path — that forced many concerned with peace to confront a challenging question: what would you do to stop a war?

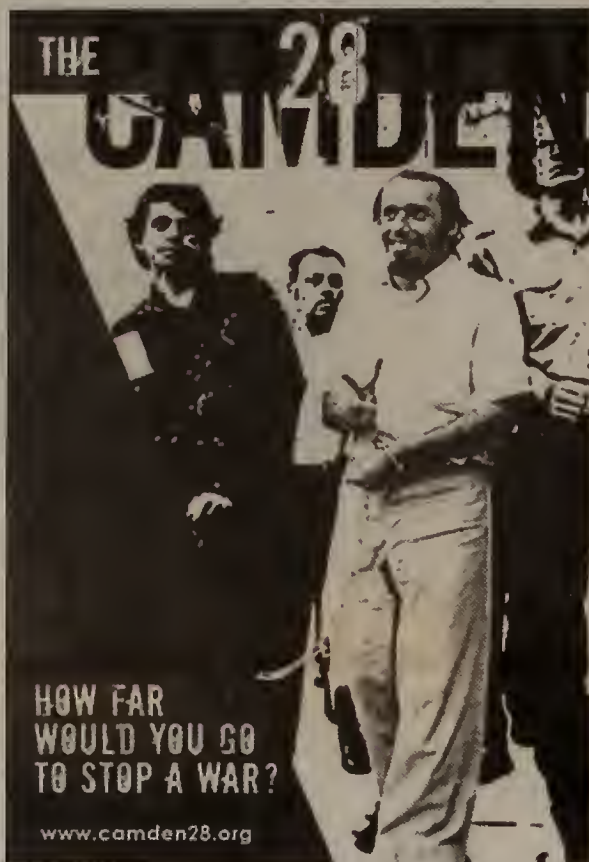
That question lies at the heart of *Camden 28*, a remarkable new film by Anthony Giacchino. The Canadian premiere will be held at Innis Town Hall on Wednesday, October 25 at 7 pm. The film documents the story of a group of 28 New Jersey residents, including a significant number of Catholic priests, who took direct action to stop the war that would result in heavy charges and the possibility of 47 years in prison. Draft boards held the paperwork on most young men in America and were the starting place for induction into the armed forces. By destroying draft files, the groups reasoned, they made it more difficult to call up young men to send to Vietnam.

Camden 28 documents, with archival footage, some of the actions that marked the period, such as the pouring of blood on draft files in 1967 by four people in Baltimore. It also documents one of the defining protests of the period: the burning of draft files in Catonsville, Maryland, with homemade napalm. In the following years, scores of similar actions took place, resulting in the destruction of upwards of 1 million draft files, and placing some members of war came to be known as the Catholic Left on FBI most wanted lists.

The *Camden 28* were unique for a number of reasons, which are explained through the course of the film. The FBI placed a mole within the organizing group, and so the highest levels of the U.S. government kept tabs on the group as they made their plans. Equally remarkable is the fact that the group was acquitted at a trial that is described by then Supreme Court Justice William Brennan as "one of the great trials of the 20th century."

The screening of *Camden 28* is sponsored by Homes not Bombs, Science for Peace, and Development and Peace. It's part of a fall campaign protesting the wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, and will be followed up by an October 28 cross-country day of action demanding the return of Canadian troops from Afghanistan. Also screening on October 25 is the short film, *Mothers' Day at Wescam*, documenting two days of rallies and civil disobedience that took place at Wescam in May of this year.

For more information on the campaign, call (416) 651-5800, email tasc@web.ca, or visit www.homesnotbombs.ca



The Past, Present and Future of Equal Marriage

...Continued from cover

Arron explained that much of his work involved not trying to convince MPs to support same-sex marriage, but rather persuading them that could afford to support equal marriage without political consequences. Arron's organization, Canadians for Equal Marriage, paid to conduct polls in the ridings of wavering MPs, and then gave them the data so that they could get a true feel for the strength (or lack thereof) of opposition to gay marriage in their localities. Arron's results were quite striking: nationally, the "strongly opposed" response had declined to just 24%, while "strongly supportive" had risen to over 36%, with the vast majority not caring particularly either way. Even more remarkably, an almost two-thirds majority of new Conservative voters were opposed to reopening the gay marriage question. The information had done much to assuage the fears of some MPs, particularly rookie Conservative members, who, in Arron's words, "get a hundred phone calls and start freaking out." Based on commitments he had received from MPs, Arron confidently predicted that the motion on whether to reopen gay marriage would be defeated by "about twenty-five votes, give or take ten votes depending on abstentions." And if the government actually succeeded in restoring the former definition of marriage, Petersen explained, legal chaos would result: the court rulings in almost every Canadian jurisdiction would still contravene any attempts to deny marriage licenses to gay couples.

Speaking with me after the panel discussion, Arron had a number of other interesting points to make. To my surprise, he informed me that leading Liberal Senators had told him that they would use the Red Chamber to block any anti-gay marriage bill.

4

Apparently they would argue that the Senate had a function to protect Charter rights, which struck me as a rather interesting constitutional innovation. When

asked about whether pro-gay marriage Conservative MPs faced difficulties in keeping their nominations, he quickly responded that, "the ones in Alberta are in serious trouble, especially [Indian Affairs Minister Jim] Prentice, [James] Rajotte, and [Rahim] Jaffer." Non-Albertan MPs were, he reasoned, safe. Arron also disclosed a rather revealing argument made to him by anti-gay marriage MPs: "they say, 'when I say I'm married, I don't want to be asked if I'm married to a man. I want people to know I'm married to a woman.' They want their marriage to be a public symbol of their heterosexuality." It's interesting that anti-gay activists substitute neurotic sexual insecurity for reason and logic. Finally, Arron assured me that Canadians for Equal Marriage had wealthy donors and deep pockets, and would be well equipped to launch further litigation if necessary. One hopes, however, that the forces of reaction in Canada will cease their struggle against the tide of social justice.

Want to write for us?

Want to be our Treasurer or Media Rep?

Interested in joining our listserv?

Email us at innis.herald@utoronto.ca

Submissions: heraldeditors@yahoo.com

Getting the Skinny on Fashion Controversy

Christine Creighton weighs in on the thin model ban on European catwalks

Unless you've been living under a rock for the past month, you've surely heard about the skinny model ban that is shaking up the fashion industry. Whether or not you regularly watch Fashion Television or Access Hollywood, it's impossible not to have come across the issue in the newspapers or on CNN. The decision to prevent underweight models from participating in Madrid's fashion week – a trend that Milan quickly picked up on – is generating a great cultural debate over the nature of beauty.

Like most young women, I have several friends and acquaintances who have gone to extreme lengths to reach the unrealistic appearance of a runway model. Suffering for "beauty" (if you consider the skin-and-bones look beautiful) is a fact of life for many people who believe that they will not be desirable unless they conform to a certain waifish mold. And it's not just regular young women feeling the pressure: in early August, an up-and-coming 22-year-old model from Uruguay, Luisel Ramos, died of heart failure after a runway show. Her regiment to prepare for the show? Swear off food for two weeks.

When I heard that ultra-thin models would be off the runway, I was initially pleased that people were finally starting to see their harmful influence on girls. Although the 90s decade of "heroin chic" has finally ended, the average model still weighs in at ten pounds underweight.



This begs the question of how one can define a "healthy" weight. Since the mid-1800s, the Body Mass Index has been used as diagnostic tool for every weight issue from starvation to obesity. This is the method that the Spanish Association of Fashion Designers used to determine which of their models were fit to walk the runway, and which ones should be told to go home and eat a sandwich.

I was curious to learn more about this apparently arbitrary method of assigning the label of "healthy" versus "unhealthy," so I decided to look further into the issue. Calculated by dividing weight (in pounds) by squared height (in inches) and multiplying the total by 703, the BMI provides a weight-to-height ratio. People with a "healthy" weight will have a BMI between 18.5 and 25. A BMI under 15 signifies starvation, while a BMI over 30 indicates obesity. Fashion week organizers in Spain ruled that models must have a minimum BMI of 18 to participate in their show.

Naturally, my first act upon learning this magical formula was to calculate my own Body Mass Index. Before I tell you what it is, please consider the fact that I work in a chocolate store (consuming about ten illegal chocolates a day; don't tell my boss); moreover, my limited culinary skills result in the frequent consumption of Kraft Dinner and chicken fingers. I also have a detrimental addiction to fast food, ice cream, and Coke. Oh, and I haven't gone to the gym in about eight months. So, how do I weigh in, you ask? According to my lifestyle, I should probably be morbidly obese, but my freakishly fast metabolism and naturally petite frame put me at a BMI of 18.2, apparently "underweight" and barely permissible for a Spanish catwalk!

Learning my own BMI forced me to reconsider my initial reaction ("yay!") to the banning of skinny models. After all, if fashion week coordinators had announced that models with a BMI over 25 were to be banned, it would undoubtedly create an uproar. Assuming that some women are naturally built with a willowy frame, just as others are naturally heavy-set, is it not just as insulting to discriminate against thin women as it would be to ban "chubby" models from the runway?

I understand that the fashion industry is trying to fight back against the negative stereotype of the anorexic model, but it's important to be realistic about the extent of the problem. The average American woman, at five-foot-four and 152 pounds, falls into the "overweight" category with a BMI of 26. The health dangers of obesity have been a topic of debate just as much as the skinny model ban, adding a new dimension to the issue. In defense of slim models, one could argue that they propagate a positive body image in the face of a dangerously sedentary society. When one can be criticized as "too thin" one week and "too fat" the next, it's difficult to find a balance for health and beauty.

As I pondered both sides of the thin model debate, I flipped through pictures from fashion magazines and tried to consider the issue from the fashion industry's viewpoint. From a cold business perspective, health is far less important than whether or not the outfit will sell better if it's displayed on a 100-pound model or a 140-pound model. All I could conclude was that clothes look better on a person than on a hanger – and some models appear too close to the latter.

Drugs

From the sound of it, Will Rhathe might be on them

What's all the bubblub about drugs, I ask. All the cool kids are doing it. I know they're cool because all my idols do it: Harry Potter – I'm sure he's smoked some dragon dust, Madonna – c'mon she's 40 and looks like that! Winnie the Pooh – he's got to be into some sort of spiked honey to get into the trouble he gets into.

So once again what is it about drugs that hold such an appeal? This reporter decided to take a foray into the wild and find out for himself first hand. Curious about where to score my next quarter-ounce of the wacky tobaccy, I wandered into a posh night club. A quick survey of my surroundings told me that the average age of the people around me was roughly sixteen. Sixteen-year-olds appear to be hopped up on drugs, how else would they dance the way they do? I sat down at a booth with my brother in arms, had a drink, and soon enough opportunity knocked. Two young fellows sat down across from us and started up some chit-chat.

If I was on drugs I would start talking to strangers. My mom told me not to talk to strangers, so if I'm talking her, I may as well be doing drugs too. That logic seems solid. I concluded there two fellows were on, or had been on drugs so I inquired. They knew where to find "the good stuff" so we exchanged phone numbers. They must've been hardcore since they said they'd call me back within the hour. To seal the deal we shook hands as gentlemen do. To my dismay the young boy across from me stuck out his stub; no hand, just a stub. Drugs must've made him that cool. Aside from the ceremonial dilemma I was faced with (do you shake his stub or give him "props"), I knew that instant he was a cool kid. He even told me how cool he was himself! I got him one of those gimpy signs to put in his car allowing him to park wherever he wished.

Before too long I found myself smoking and beating Super Mario in 6 minutes flat. This is a skill begotten only by stoners. And while we're on number 6, this leads to my second attempt at scoring drugs. It led me to a long lost acquaintance adhering to the "6 Degrees of Separation" rule. He was a friend of a friend, whose sister bangs a guy in jail, who robbed liquor stores with a guy who shares a washroom with a drug dealer. As it turned out, this person just lives down the street.



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How Much Does the TTC Suck?

Suzanna Fung Vents Her Frustration With The Toronto Transit Commission

The TTC sucks a lot. But, by how much? Let me elaborate on how much it sucks to travel from Scarborough to downtown Toronto. First of all, it's a long-ass journey to get down here. Secondly, it takes forever for the bus to come. Third, but not the last, it is expensive and inconvenient.

Let me tell you my story. So, supposedly the TTC has a schedule that it is supposed to stick to, right? WRONG!

Let's say I plan to take a bus that is scheduled for 11:00 am. I'm there at the bus stop by 10:55 am. Now I start the waiting game. I check the time and it says 11:05am. I start thinking, "maybe there was some traffic, and I will only have to wait a while longer". I was wrong, oh so very, very wrong. Minutes pass by agonizingly slowly. I check the time again, and it reads 11:20 am. "Okay, so maybe there was a LOT of traffic!" Several long minutes pass and the time is now 11:40 am. At this point, I am really pissed and really late for class, so I start muttering "Where the fuck is the bus? Holy crap...I hate the fucking bus SO much!" I look around the bus stop and see other people waiting for the bus as well, we all look at each other and think the same damn thing: "when the fuck is the bus coming?!" I look at the time again and it reads 11:50 am. By now, I am really fucking pissed off and about ready to kick someone in the face, when I finally see the bus turning the corner. Anger is soon replaced by relief and I get on the bus. I flash my metropass and I give the driver the most evil stare I can muster. He just gives me a blank stare in return, so I keep moving into the bus, grumbling the whole way.

According to the schedule, there should have been a bus at 11:00 am and 11:25 am. Which means the "oh so greatly organized" TTC missed two stupid buses!! What kind of bullshit is that? I mean, they put it on the schedule and the buses don't even fucking come! I am angry at how disorganized the public transportation system is! I mean how can they expect us to pay more money for the same bad service and be satisfied?! Practically half my school year is wasted on the TTC and that's a lot of time that I could have spent STUDYING! Well...not really. I probably would have been sleeping, but you get the idea! Sadly, for

a poor student like me who has spent nearly all of her money on University fees and living expenses, there is nothing much I can do about it. I will just have to wait and suffer, until one day when I will be able to afford a car. A wonderful car that will not keep me waiting or take a billion hours to get from point A to B.



Commuting for dummies

Barbara Kowalski offers a friendly guide for the unenlightened

Let me begin by saying that when I started my first year, I was terrified of being a commuter. How I longed to live in a shiny new apartment-style suite and brag about getting up ten minutes before class and being independent! There were numerous myths going around about commuters not having any real friends and never getting invited to parties and not getting the real university experience. An acquaintance even told me that he would never make

friends with a commuter because they could never be "real" friends. I thought I would never make it as a commuter. Well what a load of bogus that was! Here I am, three weeks into my second year and still commuting strong! Not only that, I also learned a few things that can actually make the whole experience pleasant and meaningful.

First of all, on the topic of friends: the

amounts of friendships you have in your life are under no circumstances determined by whether you are a commuter, an on-campus resident, or how many people are on your Facebook for that matter! They are determined by how sociable you are, how determined you are to be sociable and the degree to which you cherish your friendships. By being approachable, taking chances and risking embarrassment by talking to random people you can create a ton of friendships that are worthwhile and not one bit affected by how far away you live. Besides, by commuting you have more opportunities to meet new people because your daily contact with the world isn't limited to your classes and dorm. So there.

Second, knowing how to coordinate commuting with a social and academic life is not a rare gift... although that would be cool. It's more of a disciplinary skill. As a commuter, you have to know your limitations and priorities, but most of all, know the bus schedule! There is nothing sadder than having to spend \$50 on a cab ride just because you missed the last bus out of Finch Station...nothing. Once you've acknowledged the above, there's no reason why you can't go out and round up that university experience.

Finally, commuting can actually be fun! A two hour commute can be seen as a waste of time, or as a beautiful train ride on a clear fall day during which you can virtually do whatever you want. Bored? Do some reading. Tired of reading?

Eavesdrop on a conversation, never too obviously of course. Bored commuters can have the most entertaining conversations! Play 'name that tune' with the deafening music coming from your neighbors' iPod. People listen to the craziest songs! Or, better yet, let others play 'name that tune' with the deafening music coming from your iPod. If all else fails, sleep like there's no tomorrow, snoring and all.

And if, after all this, you still regret being a commuter, think about all those horror stories you hear about the abominable roommate and the nights spent at Robarts because the dorm was hosting a kegger. If spending more time in a prison-library is what you really want, by all means move out right now. As for everything else, just remember: at the end of the day, there's no place like home.



Drugs

...Continued from page 5

I harmlessly scored a couple grams of shrooms from this acquaintance. I ate them with some hummus and crackers and without further ado descended into a state of delirium. I found myself wandering around the streets of suburbia. Without sounding too hokey, it was much like an Indian spirit quest. The grass shimmered and leaves spoke to me, something about a game of high risk. That was where I felt my life was headed - a lifetime of high risk.

If tales of one-handed men and journeys where you return to consciousness with your head dunked in a pond with no recollection of how you arrived there appeals to you; go play, have fun! But if this world isn't your brand of hash, just listen to your mother. The real world is scary. You can escape it by staying in school forever... doesn't that make school just as bad as drugs? Fuzzy logic wins.

Love: A Reality Check

Michael Beeler separates fact from fiction

Love lasts forever. All you need is Love. Love can move mountains. Love is a many splendored thing. Let's talk about love.

Yes Celine, let's talk about love. Let's get down and dirty with the raw details of this prolific ailment for which "there ain't no cure." We need not turn to our beloved 20th century popstars and vintage celebs for wisdom on this matter – no, in fact, we even can turn to writers from the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the Romantic period for truly inspirational texts sur l'amour. Dig back to Plato's forms if you seek a better handle on your love life – or develop love handles from sitting around. But wait... have these dudes and dudettes fired cupid's arrow on the mark? Have they strengthened our grasp of the human condition, or have centuries of sentimental, wishful thinking allowed them to propagate myths as false as the ones spread around residence common rooms? The Discovery Channel barred me from Mythbusters for my R-rated aggression against Love; read on if you wish to hear what never made it to your TV.

Myth 1: Star-crossed lovers – Love is meant to be. We are predestined or meant by fate to fall in love with our special someone.

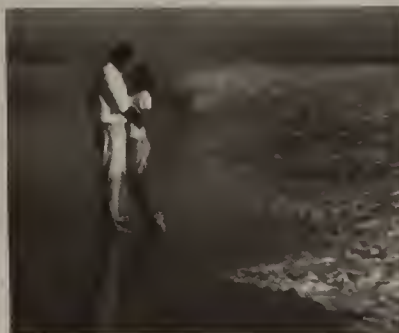
Reality Check: Nothing is guaranteed in this world (except death). You could be killed by a drunk driver on your honeymoon, and don't tell me your lover will conclude "well, I guess it just wasn't meant to be." Relationships need to be sustained with work – how comforting it is to believe that you're destined to be together and that love will rise above all obstacles, but if you think conviction is sufficient, let me refer you to Jessica Simpson's off-air reality TV show *Newlyweds*. You'll find it more enlightening than the legendary couple of fair Verona.

Myth 2: One Soulmate, One Love. There is one person in this world, and only one person, who can completely understand and love you. Your spirits fuse into one person.

Reality Check: Is it the proper destiny of young widows and widowers to remain lonely and in isolation because they can/will never find their true love again? Suppose one falls in "true love" at the ripe age of 55 – certainly you were destined to be single for those unimportant 30 years just so you could be available for Mr./Mrs. Right. Sure. I'd posit that, though one is often enough, and often too many, we could live in happy, tender relationships with many various people, individually or simultaneously (whatever works for you). There are degrees of compatibility, not two categories: 1 soul-mate and 6.5 billion others.

Myth 3: True Love lasts forever.

Reality Check: Romeo and Juliet didn't live long enough to have a mid-life crisis. Cinderella lived happily ever after, as did Snow White, Rapunzel and the Little Mermaid. Unfortunately, there's a global shortage of rich, rugged, handsome princes.



So, in practice, does love last forever? Well, according to *Divorce Magazine* 49% of marriages in the United States end in divorce; the figure is 64% in Sweden, 56% in Finland, 68% in Belarus, but in Turkey the divorce rate is only 6%, and it's even lower in Saudi Arabia – I wonder, maybe in liberal countries people just don't know how to fall in true love. Maybe those Arabian nights are more romantic than the bitter winters of North-

ern Europe. Or maybe it is quite a normal phenomenon for couples to stop loving each other after the years go by; perhaps we tend to fail to sustain relationships and rediscover our partners as they change, and as our initial lusts and intrigues fade. Either that or our spouse-picking skills could use a brush up in LOV101H1 F T5101; Love: Reality Check.

To me these myths are like stuffed animals. They provide comfort as I crawl in bed after a failed relationship and console myself with the belief that, inevitably, my lover and I will one day live happily ever after – yes, as comforting as a stuffed animal, and probably nicer smelling than a real one, but just as fake. Facing reality doesn't mean we shouldn't aspire for fulfilling relationships – I still do – but it means accepting the world for what it is, and a fairy-tale it isn't.

The World Cup 2006: Bringing Out the City's Colours

Marco Covi reflects on the festivities

As the summer days sizzled in mid-June and July, so was the World Cup atmosphere in Toronto. Whether it was the Ghanaians proudly waving their flags in the North,

the Argentines exulting their Latino pride on Keele street, or the Portuguese and Italians creating symphonies of car-horns on College and St Clair West, the summer sizzled with cultural pride. How amazing it is that all these cultures can co-exist and even intermingle through a simple game. The World Cup atmosphere made Toronto's streets all the more lively despite the various other yearly events that take Toronto's streets by storm such as the Jazz Festival and Caribana.



The World Cup just exaggerated a well-known truth about Torontonians: we as

Torontonians are probably Canada's most accepting and hospitable people. Whether it be a jazz quartet performing at harbour front, a benefit concert like SARStock or sports event like the World Cup, we have shown that Torontonians can party hard and embrace all. I have experienced this first hand many times. I was warmly accepted by the University of Toronto's Latin American Studies club (OLAS), even though I am of Italian origin. My friends are of varied cultural backgrounds from Guyana to El Salvador. A wonderful Mexican-Canadian lady, who didn't even know me, bought my friend and I drinks and tacos one year at the annual Latin cultural festival salsa on St Clair.

You need look no further than your own campus to see this hospitality. Visit Sid Smith, and you'll have people from various ethnic backgrounds trying to coerce you into their cultural clubs. Foreigners are especially valued as participants because as an outsider, you are intrigued to learn more about these cultures. The U of T community is a projection of the friendly hustle and bustle of Toronto life.

These thoughts of our cultural metropolis fermented in my mind as I was honking my horn on the eve that Italy beat Germany. As I passed by France supporters, they waved passionately shouting, "Viva Italia!" and "Vive La France!" as they honked their horns. I saw Jamaicans, Indians and Orientals alike waving Italian, German and Trinidad flags. There were Cuban drummers and Italian tambourines ringing out fast-paced fevish rhythms. The atmosphere was one of general hospitality. As I made a fool out of myself blowing my whistle, I thought to myself what this victory meant to me. To me and I'm sure to many Italian Canadians, it meant a resurgence of pride in our culture and chance to showcase ourselves to the world. But it also meant that we as Torontonians, regardless of colour or creed can all get along and become friends while at the same time maintaining our pride in our origins without having to worry about reproach and hostility. I believe Toronto is, in a true sense, a portrait of liberal democracy and a testament to the cultural mosaic that we call Canada.

Poetry Corner

Cat Lesson 1

a fat black cat
lies on my lap
yellow eyes searching
mine seeking
a mirror to know
himself

his body purrs
vibrating to
rhythms of heaven
calling me in
this moment to know
love

thoughts thinking me
away like sirens
raunting, seducing
pleading, calling
me away to know
confusion

my fat black cat
caresses my scarred
soul back toward
his gentle call
with him to know
life

Bob Bamford

untitled

The lone seagull on the ice
Ducked his head
And called the others.

Come quickly he cried, There is food
But none came.

Without competition
He soon lost heart,
And called the wind instead

Anon.

So You Wanna Get Cultured, Eh? Leonard Elias Gives You the Lowdown On Canadian Theatre

A lot of people don't know this but Toronto is the third biggest theatre centre in North America. But I suppose that makes sense considering we're the fifth biggest city in North America. Yet, considering this, how much theatre do you see as a university student? How are you going to impress that beautiful person you met at the coffee shop without being able to show off your stunning cultured sensibility? It's probably time to start seeing more theatre.

Before I give you information on the theatres in the area, here is why you should go see more theatre:

1. Name one Canadian movie you saw in the past year. If you can, great! Good on you. But likely you probably haven't. Theatre in Toronto is by Canadians, offering a Canadian perspective on the world. I think it's really funny that people can be so anti-American and yet so non-Canadian with their entertainment choices.
2. People often say that Canadian theatre sucks. These people are idiots. Next time you ever hear a person say that, ask them to name three Canadian playwrights. Toronto is one of the most up and coming theatre centers in the world. The Europeans love us. The Americans would love us too if they actually read Canadian plays.
3. The world has to deal with its various cultures clashing more and more often these days. Canada (particularly Toronto) is a model for multiculturalism, and our theatre reflects that. Theatres of the world are beginning to understand that Canadian plays speak to a global audience.
4. Really, it's just good. I know, I know, some shows suck. That happens...But most shows are pretty darn solid. Discover them before the Americans or Europeans do. Be proud of your culture!

Here's information about some of the major theatres in Toronto that may spark your interest:

Mirvish Productions

This is the biggest name in Toronto theatre. These are the guys that did *Lord of the Rings* and *Mamma Mia*. Their production value is generally through the roof. Even if the audience doesn't like the play, they will almost always appreciate the quality. Look out for *Wicked* at the Canon Theatre in October and November. www.mirvish.com

Factory Theatre

These guys are my favorite. This theatre revolutionized the theatre world in Canada. It was the first theatre to seek out Canadian playwrights and is famous for discovering the Canadian master George F. Walker. Factory has been putting on edgy and creative pieces for 37 years now. If nothing else, you really need to see *Better Living*. www.factorytheatre.ca

Tarragon Theatre

Tarragon Theatre is devoted to encouraging new playwrights and they have found some real winners over the years. They produce new plays with the absolute best names in the Toronto theatre community. My favorite playwright, Jason Sherman, has received a lot of support from Tarragon and, from that, has improved Canadian theatre ten-fold. This is the place to go when you really want to see something brand new. www.tarragontheatre.com

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

GO HIRE THIS YEAR!!!! There is a celebration of Daniel MacIvor's work this year. He is an amazing performer. If you are seeing Canadian theatre for the first time - SEE HIS SHOWS!!!! I really can't stress this enough. www.buddiesinbadtimes.com

Necessary Angel Theatre

"No question is too simple, no question too large for Necessary Angel to tackle. They reject the convenient, the conventional and are committed to giving every play they create the necessary time to develop. They aim to create theatre that is immediate, surprising, and essential; essential entertainment for a world on the brink..." That's quoting Daniel Brooks, the artistic director of Necessary Angel. He'll say it better than I can. All I can do is vouch for him. Seriously, his stuff is good. Really, really good. www.necessaryangel.com

Soulpepper Theatre

Soulpepper works to take classics and offer vital Canadian interpretations. This is a good place for those of you that love the classics and are tired of watching them getting butchered by student productions. Go check out *King Lear*, it's on right now until the middle of October. www.soulpepper.ca

There are more theatres in Toronto that are also worth checking out - I just hit the major ones. Theatre is a wonderful experience because theoretically, anything can happen. An actor could walk off the stage and punch you in the face. Or kiss you. The best thing that can happen in a film is the reel slipping off.

Hot Cultural Cuisine Spots in Toronto

Reviews by Marco Covi

Pizzaiolo

Queen St W location.

www.pizzaiolo.ca

416-364-5551

If you're looking for great gourmet pizza for a reasonable price, look no further than Pizzaiolo. Just a ten-minute streetcar ride west to Queen and Bathurst will bring you within sniffing distance of the fresh basil and oregano of Pizzaiolo. Just walk less than two minutes west on the north side of Queen and you're there. For five dollars you get a large slice and a pop. The crust, with its moist pockets of air, is crisp but not burnt. The sauce is what hooks you from the beginning though. It blends a perfect combination of sweetness from the tomatoes with aroma from the basil. Just reading this aloud is giving me an orgasm. There are many pizzas to choose from. Whether it's the traditional Prima Vera or Soprano or the vegan alternatives, Pizzaiolo has i gusti tuoi. But don't take my word for it, see for yourself.



Margarita's Fiesta Room

14 Baldwin St

416-977-5525

Take a stroll down the secluded Baldwin St. off Berkeley, and you'll find a splendid surprise as Margarita's, the essence of creativity in Baldwin village, entices you to its doors. Just minutes away from the U of T campus, Margarita's Fiesta Room is a small and cosy little enclave that radiates enticement. The front boundary is interestingly enough, a colourfully painted old garage door, which opens in the summer months to expand the front patio. The décor and lighting makes for a warm and intimate cantina-style setting. Like any good Mexican restaurant, they indicate the spiciest foods on their menu in terms of a chilli pepper legend, Margarita's is famous for their generously sized frozen Margaritas that come in 5 delectable flavours. I especially recommend the Enchiladas. The price range is quite reasonable, so if you want to excite your stomach and try some truly authentic Mexican cuisine, come out to Margarita's Fiesta Room.



Sex and Our City: "The Big BAM"

Marion Balsam

I'll be upfront right away. I have never been in a long term relationship. By long term I mean that I have never had a relationship that is comparable to Zack and Kelly from Saved by the Bell, or even what Joey and Dawson had. I have, however, been devoted to someone, waited for people, avoided people, have run away from situations, and pursued many, many a boy in my life. If I have experienced all of this, then why was there no climbing through my love's bedroom window via the ladder that was so conveniently placed? This, my fellow, and hopefully soon devoted readers, is because I believe in love at first sight.

Now, if we were all living like the Jewish did in the magical musical Fiddler on the Roof, we would all have a Yente in our community and we would fall into love...eventually. However, that is not how our Western society functions now-a-days, nor is it something that seems very appealing. There are some cultures that embrace that method, and my Finnish Grandfather will tell me on a drunken occasion that I shouldn't go after North American boys because they will end up having to go to Iraq. Unfortunately, for his sake, I'm just going to have to take that chance.

But how do we know how to take that chance? When do you know to really go after someone? And how do you do it? Well, my busy scholars, what has generally worked the best for me in terms of devotion and having a relationship, is the BAM factor.

Now just what is the BAM factor, you ask? Well, the BAM factor is when you initially meet someone and know that you have to go after them, whatever the circumstances. (Now, I'm not encouraging nipping apart and destroying a relationship. Please don't do that. If your BAM is in a relationship...just wait it out. You don't want to be a vicious piranha about it, or like my Aunt Betty, a cougar in overalls.)

One of my big rules for experiencing a BAM is do not take it seriously if you are drunk. It is safe to say that about 99% of drunken BAMs is just your libido (or love muscle, as one of my good friends once put it) talking. I know, and that's because I've been there. If you're in the 1% of people who have been able to keep a successful relationship after an evening of inebriation, congratulations. You deserve a ribbon, or a medal, or something. However, for

the rest of us who aren't that lucky, we probably won't really remember what we had said, why the other party has said what they have said, or let alone if they remember it. And if you had to get drunk to profess your love, then there's something wrong, and leave that love boat as if it were on fire.

The first time I experienced the BAM was when I was fourteen years old. It was at the end of the summer, and I had never seen anyone as beautiful, or felt the need to approach someone. It was like I had a whole new kind of confidence that I was never aware of. Our hot and cold summer romance lasted for three years, much like a Carrie Bradshaw/Mr. Big kind of thing.

For a long time I used to think that it was impossible to find someone else who could enchant me so quickly ever again. I would try to let someone grow on me, but I always felt like I was just settling. There was even a time when I tried to keep seeing someone who...just smelt nice. All I need to say is that none of those ill-fated attempts had led me to more intolerable frustration, mostly with myself.

After a long time of hopelessly waiting for "the one," I have met my second BAM, and he is possibly better fitted for me than the first. I'm still in the process of wooing him, and to keep a "mystique" I will only say this: if my theory is right, all will work out. If not, Carrie and Big end up together at the end of the series, so loneliness is not something that I fear.

So my dear friend, I will leave you with this to mull over until next month. Please do not settle because you deserve the best. Even if your libido wants that male model...

marionbalsam@hotmail.com

God's Lonely Man: Casino Part III by Daniel Dalimonte

In a nutshell, the point of this article is to look at the third of a threesome of films in order to show that a specific style and worldview had culminated in Scorsese's *Casino* (1995). The problem is, however, that I am probably absolutely wrong. I have talked with many enthusiastic Scorsese followers, but have never once come across a single person who has not undervalued *Casino* to its predecessor *Goodfellas* (1989). Nonetheless, I have decided to continue this now 4-issue long analysis of *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull* and *Casino*. I will still look at *Casino* as the third major Scorsese-De Niro film, and one that improves on the worldview developed in *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*. This means that I will forego an analysis of *Goodfellas*, as I feel it does not adequately embody all of the elements of this Scorsese worldview. *Casino*, on the other hand, does. So let me once more say that I am interested in *Casino* as the pinnacle of this three-pronged attack by Scorsese, and that this is solely my opinion and not yours. In other words, I could be wrong and me writing my opinion in no way forces you to see it in as being right. You can still have your own opinion (that *Goodfellas* is a superior film than *Casino*). Now, let me look at what I believe is Scorsese's *Jackie Brown*.

In *Casino*, much of the story is documented by the voice over narration of the major characters. For instance, we learn of the skimming of the casino's money by listening to Nicki's (Joe Pesci) summation of what is happening, "just another fat fuck walking out of the casino with a suitcase." The camera follows a man walking into the count room, and then moves past him to reveal several other men counting large stacks of cash. It circles a table full of cash (dolling in once or twice to emphasize the amount) and then follows the same man out of the room as he exits the casino. This sequence is a long take that is the equivalent to the brodel and ring entrance shots in *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*. While all three sequences reveal important narrative information (Travis' salvation, Jake's single moment of truth, the corrupt operation of the Tangiers casino), it is exactly the length and movement of these three shots that allow them to call attention to themselves thereby forcing you to react in a more engaging manner. It is as if the director is saying, "look at what I can do," and he says it when it is the opportune time to convey story information most relevant to the development of the characters and the plot. If you look at the three films in question, *Casino* has the most active camera. At times it almost seems like the camera swings in broad strokes like a painter's brush.

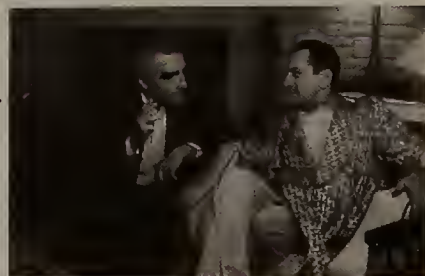
In previous issues I looked at the powerful score in *Taxi Driver* by Bernard Hermann as well as slow motion sound in *Raging Bull* to argue different ways the director uses the soundtrack to relay character state of mind. *Casino*'s music tracks are used to convey both character state of mind and plot development. When the same man from the beginning of the film (the fat fuck) arrives with a briefcase filled with cash for the mobsters in Kansas, we hear a song remind us, "you're nobody till somebody loves you." When Ginger (Sharon Stone) moves into her new mansion purchased on Sam's money Donny Day sings "what a difference a day makes," referring to the sudden wealth she achieves by marrying Sam. Other examples include the lyrics "I've got 700 dollars" when Sam is running the casino tables and "my sweet baby," which plays when he sees Ginger for the first time and falls for her. Of course, this shot is filmed in slow motion similar to the Jake-Vicki shots in *Raging Bull*. Outside of the soundtrack, I would like to bring up the memorable scene when a character is snorting coke. Here, the director actually places a camera inside of a large white

cylindrical object filled with white powder that spirals out of the top. This shot is in tune with the use of the musical soundtrack since it adds to the otherwise basic style of the visuals. It shows a constant drive by the director to see and represent things differently. This experimentation, however, all comes down to the same hybrid style found in *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*.

With *Casino*, we learn of the fictional world by following the characters in real settings: hotels, courtrooms, airports, offices, mansions, golf courses, restaurants and the sexy Las Vegas desert. Everything is shot on location. Moreover, in combination with the voice over narration that drives the narrative you really get a sense of a documentation of the fictional characters and their world. I mean that it is a very straightforward style like in the better half of both *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*. In the aforementioned long take, Nicki explains the whole process as if he was talking directly to the viewer. The only way to understand the world of the film is to follow the characters that continually dominate it. On the other hand, the director distorts the images to the point that they turn extremely dark and de-familiarized. Costumes are extraordinarily bright ranging from Ginger's black dress that shimmers in the light to Sam's pink or even off-blue blazers. The characters become livelier with the bright neon lights of the casino setting as well as the low-key lit rooms outside of the casino. When Nicki attacks a customer with a pen at a bar, for instance, blood and smoke (two elements already used to perfection in *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*) cover his sweaty face, giving him a menacing presence. Of course, this is given from Sam's point of view where he sees Nicki recovering his breath in slow motion. This slowness emphasizes the grittiness of the scene, and I like to believe the sickness of Sam's world.

Moving onto the protagonist, Sam seems corrupt at the beginning of the film when he makes such statements as "Vegas is about taking care of others," and "back home I'd be getting punished for this (making so much money), but here I'm rewarded." But as the story progresses, you find out that Sam is in fact Jewish and not a real part of the mafia but instead just an important puzzle piece that gets used. In contrast to Nicki, who dies in one of the most graphic scenes in recent memory, Sam makes his money from gambling fairly. You find out early on that he has always had a love for gambling and a skill for picking winners to the extent that he usually never loses money. In the casino, Sam doesn't take any money from the count room; in fact, he isn't even allowed in it. Rather, he protects the game of gambling from sick gamblers interested only in greed. In one scene he punishes two card players using a highly illegal form of cheating and sums up his view of the incident, "they would survive if they weren't so greedy." I want to say that whereas everyone around him (especially Ginger and Nicki) is in town to make a quick buck, he is there simply for his passion of picking winners. No scene better exemplifies this than the one where we see him weighing a pair of dice obsessively or snapping at a card dealer to lay the chips down properly.

Of course he has his rough spots. Like Jake from *Raging Bull*, Sam suspects his wife of fooling around. Suspicious of her childhood love, he asks Ginger on their wedding night, "that part of your life is over with, right? You're with me now, right?" He gives her the key to his hard-earned fortune and concludes that, "Vegas was a dream." His dream, however, is cut short by Nicki's tainting of the smooth operations. When Sam is asked to join Nicki's opera-



tions of burglary and food he rejects the offer on the bases of immoral grounds. He says, "I want a square joint, I don't wanna go in with you." In case you missed it, Nicki uses his restaurant business to spit into sandwiches of returning patrons when he isn't using the parking lot for a quick blowjob from a showgirl.

After Sam loses his gambling license, he asks Andy to cut Nicki loose. This forces Nicki to threaten Sam by digging a hole in the desert where he will place him. Ginger, Sam's wife isn't much better. Alcohol, drugs, sleeping pills and more money now dictate her life, which was once controlled just by material wealth. To make things worse, she sleeps with Nicki in exchange for help to get "her" bank key back from Sam. In the saddest part of any Scorsese film, you see Sam try over and over again to forgive Ginger and make her clean so that they can provide a proper upbringing to their child. Compare this to the constant attempts by Travis to purify Jodi Foster's character in *Taxi Driver* or the refusal of Jake to job for the mafia in *Raging Bull*. Eventually, he finally comes to accept the truth that everyone around him, save maybe his daughter, is sick. This is most blatantly expressed in the fact that both his best friend and wife conspired to kill him. In the last shot of the film, Sam sits in front of a television and watches thoroughbred horse racing. He wears the same glasses that a rejecting Travis wears in *Taxi Driver*, as if he is blinded by the reality of the outside world. The last shot is one where you stare at his gaze towards you and realize that he is able to live a moral and peaceful life of legalized gambling only on his own terms of loneliness. He is the only one to survive the collapse of the mafia empire perhaps because he was the only one involved who was clean from the beginning.

I will not summarize the connections or features that I find in my analysis of these three films, but instead will conclude shortly. *Casino* is the pinnacle in my books, because it is a lesson of the lonely man that you find in these three films... "God's lonely man," as Travis writes in his diary: the lonely man clean from but stuck with the burden of living in the immorality of the modern world. The distinguishing mark is the fact that the main De Niro character here does nothing wrong that you would not do yourself if put in his position, and I don't think that that can be said about the other protagonists in *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull* or the much loved *Goodfellas*. Of course, these are just some of the observations that I have come to get from these films, and if you've actually gotten this far in the article I'm sure you know that there are some trademark Scorsese marks in many of his films, which go on to *Gangs of New York*, *The Aviator* and most likely even *The Departed*. It seems the director is moving further away from the world-view covered in the past four issues of this paper and towards more commercial films resulting in milestones such as the 100 million dollar box office success of *The Aviator*. To ground it all, this director's cinema comes down to, at least subtly, to the lonely man.

Sights and Sounds of Summer '06

by Marc Saint-Cyr

Ah, summer. The perfect time to kick back, see old friends and perfect the art of doing absolutely nothing. Of course, it's also the perfect time to visit multiplexes and take in the latest crop of summer blockbusters. But for myself and other Cinema Studies students, the arrival of summer vacation offered a different sort of relief we especially appreciated. This was the big, wonderful portion of the year when I wasn't writing shot-by-shot analyses of John Woo films, researching the historical significance of the French New Wave or figuring out the types of film theory at work in Being John Malkovich. I could wait another four months until I started watching "films" again, and in the meantime get lost in/sucked into the magic of "movies." The following is a recollection of some of the most enjoyable flicks I viewed this summer.

The Da Vinci Code

Surprisingly, this was the very first movie I saw at the multiplex this summer. I say surprisingly because, up until then, I had been steadfastly avoiding anything to do with the Dan Brown-penned bestseller since it came out nearly two years ago. I had heard so much about it from other people that I had the rough gist of what all the big fuss was about, and knew enough to know I wasn't missing much. But when I was invited to come along for a 10 pm show one night in May, I shrugged my shoulders and said, "why not?"

All in all, one can say that it's a decent film – not great, per se, but decent. It wasn't so flawed that it deserved all the negative criticism it got at Cannes, but it's understandable why it was received that way. When I ventured out to go see this film, I made sure to keep my anticipation in check – I simply walked in expecting nothing more than an entertaining treasure hunt with a socio-religious theme to chew on afterwards, and that's more or less what I got. I never forgot that Dan Brown's book is a work of fiction – no matter how seriously other people might take it and its radical proposals concerning the Christian belief system. You can have your own thoughts and opinions over the ideas presented in the novel and film, but the film itself receives a solid B for its entertainment value, steady beat-the-clock pace and some delightful acting from Audrey Tautou and Ian McKellen.

Superman Returns

I found Bryan Singer's venture into the Superman franchise to be both a decently entertaining superhero flick in the vein of last year's Batman Begins and a nostalgic homage to Richard Donner's Superman: The Movie from 1978. It was especially cool to see a Marlon Brando brought back to life by CGI technology and the old-style opening credit sequence, with the cosmic titles zooming towards the audience. Kevin Spacey ably filled Gene Hackman's shoes as criminal mastermind Lex Luthor, hamming it up with Parker Posey to delightfully campy extremes at every available moment. Just as praiseworthy was the film's story, which delved into new territory in the Superman mythology – such as a Lois Lane who has settled down with a family and gotten over the entire notion of Superman – as both a savior of humanity and a love interest (or has she?). This movie did have its weaker points, though. It ran a tad longer than it had too, and I wasn't too big a fan of the whole Superboy subplot. Still, Superman Returns is at least as good as either of Sam Raimi's Spider-man films currently out on DVD now, and should provide a good fix for those eagerly awaiting the theatrical release of his third installment in the series later next year.

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest

Of all the movies I saw this summer, Dead Man's Chest was easily the biggest crowd-pleaser. This was easily proven when I went to see it with about fifteen other friends and acquaintances back from high school, all of whom were pumped with a capital P – four of them were decked out in full pirate gear, including bandanas, eye patches and one stuffed parrot. Through the entire show, we roared with laughter at Johnny Depp, panted and drooled over Kiera Knightley and sniggered at Orlando Bloom. After the credits went up, we enthusiastically praised the impressive special effects (especially the CGI work done on Davy Jones and the Kraken), marveled at the tantalizing cliff-hanger ending and endlessly speculated over what the series' next film would include. It was the perfect example of everything a summer movie should be: a fantastic escape that dazzled the eye, tickled the funny bone and captivated the senses for an impressive 2 1/2 hours. Pure popcorn cinema.

A Scanner Darkly

Okay, I lied in my introduction to this article: I did see one "film" in theatres this summer: Richard Linklater's excellent, thought-provoking A Scanner Darkly, which completely deserves to be called a work of art. Movie-goers who walked into the theatre expecting a big, action-packed, Matrix-like thriller must have been sorely disappointed. However, fans of both the Philip K. Dick novel of the same name and Linklater's style of dialogue-heavy, character-driven films would be in for a treat. This paranoid tale follows Bob Arctor (well-played by Keanu Reeves), a narcotics officer who suffers from drug addiction and, in a weird twist, is assigned to spy on himself. Winona Ryder ably co-stars as Bob's girlfriend and dealer, but it is Robert Downey Jr. who truly steals the show as the manic, insane conspiracy theorist Barris. He easily gets the best scenes and dialogue in the film, with Woody Harrelson and Rory Cochrane filling in nicely as fellow slackers/addicts Luckman and Freck. Linklater uses the same rotoscoping technology he used in his 2001 feature Waking Life to great effect, giving everything a surreal quality which perfectly compliments Arctor's dark descent into madness. Though A Scanner Darkly could be described as a dark slacker comedy, by the time you reach its grim conclusion, you'll know you have definitely seen a precautionary anti-drug film in the haunting tradition of Requiem for a Dream.

Snakes on a Plane

The majority of my summer was draped in the shadow of the highly anticipated Snakes on a Plane. Not a week went by when I didn't at some point see the trailer or some crude, fan-made trailer; glimpse the ridiculous official logo (featuring two serpents coiled around a passenger jet) inside a bus shelter or on the side of a bus, or hear one of my friends exclaim, "We got snakes!" I even heard the film title being used as an everyday expression (apparently, it can hold the same meaning as "C'est la vie," or "What're you gonna do?") Your bike has a flat tire? Snakes on a Plane. Your cat ran away? Ah well. Snakes on a Plane.) Needless to say, my curiosity was quite adequately piqued when the August release date finally rolled around.

I think the best way to think of this movie is as the Kill Bill of 2006 – though while that film was a massive tribute to kung fu, spaghetti western, samurai and '70s exploitation films, Snakes on a Plane is a clear salute to a genre equally steeped in tradition – the bad movie. You know it when you see it – the sleazy, formulaic, corny movie that you'll find playing at 2 am on the TBS Superstation. Just like Kill Bill did, Snakes on a Plane took all of the best parts of a given film genre and weaved them together into a cinematic mix-tape, chock full of all the best qualities the bad movie genre has to offer. Thinly drawn caricatures? Check. Nearly nonexistent plot revolving around a crime witness? Check. A badass rookie cop played by the only known star in the film? Check. A shitload of obviously CGI reptiles menacing our group of caricatures? Check. And an absurd situation to comprise the rest of the movie? Look no further than the title! Watching Snakes, you can instantly recall the scores of movies that this one pays tribute to – like Venom, the 1981 travesty which featured a scruffy and addled Sterling Hayden trying to protect his grandson from Klaus Kinski, who holds them hostage in their house – which also contains a Black Mamba on the loose! Sounds familiar? Then there are the films of Ed Wood, episodes of Mystery Science Theatre 3000 and straight-to-video schlock-fests that congest so many Blockbuster discount bins – Snakes on a Plane gladly follows in their footsteps. It delivers everything you'd expect from a movie with a title like that – cringe-worthy one-liners, action movie clichés aplenty and a myriad of wonderfully violent death scenes. If Plan 9 From Outer Space is the Citizen Kane of bad movies – the time-tested, certified classic – then Snakes on a Plane is the Pulp Fiction – endlessly watchable, ridiculously entertaining and a pop culture event

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The Tree of Life and of Love

James Kang



When I went into *The Fountain* on a Thursday, I was thinking to myself whether or not the film was going to be too complicated for a weekday. More importantly, was the film going to be too complicated to digest for 3:00 in the afternoon. Suffice it to say, I skipped a class and paid twenty bucks so I could see the newest film by director Darren Aronofsky, whom I may say is a director I have taken great interest in since I saw *Requiem For A Dream*.

My biggest fear for the film was that early conversations about the plot revealed that it was this bloated love story that spanned literally centuries of time. How I thought that was going to work in a film that had a running time of 90 minutes was beyond me. I had a hunch that it was obviously going to be shown through intersecting and parallel stories all being shown in real time. But what surprised me the most about the film was that it wasn't too complicated. It was about love, as simple as that, LOVE. Now, that's pretty broad right? Okay, the film is about a guy who loves his wife and is ready to do anything to keep her alive. Hugh Jackman plays Tom Verde and Rachel Weisz plays his wife Izzi, who is diagnosed with some kind of brain tumour.

Recently, I had a conversation with fellow filmmakers such as myself (we jokingly refer to ourselves as the "Canadian New Wave"). Peter Kuplowsky looks at *The Fountain* as an allegory for failure, failure in love. I guess that works, but I don't want to believe that. Questions also arise about the ending, is it success or is it failure? What's important is that he tries his hardest to succeed, and I think despite the outcome, just his character trying to save his wife surpasses any element of failure and actually becomes the success of love. What has love done to this character, besides having given him the ability to try?

What is most interesting about this film however is that there can be many discussions on it. I could go on forever about what it truly means, gain insight from some and even debate with others. Alex Jacques has this crazy theory about two parts of the film not even happening in real time but are rather symbolic of a higher theme in the film. Woah, right? Try thinking about that on an empty stomach, after not eating for a couple of hours. Daniel, the film editor, refuses to make a real comment about the film because he must watch it at least once more. The important thing, whether there is a right or wrong answer is that the film allows for discussion. I never really enjoyed reading into films, as a filmmaker I got into this field because I love films for what they are. I used to think people who ripped apart films were dolts. I always found that films were meant to be a means of escapism. But as I grow older it's fascinating to build ideas around certain films and have discussions about them. I won't push this film upon anyone, but I will say that the film for me was terrific. I can understand why people would dislike it. At times it may be overbearing, possibly even preachy. The film deals with deep and philosophical ideas about life, death, love and science as well as ideas of mythology. It's a dark science fiction, but *The Fountain* is organic, and it is certainly romantic. If you go beyond all the sci-fi jargon and ideas, you will see at its core a love story between a man and a woman, a story where time although has a position is almost meaningless in the bigger picture.

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